



**DEPARTMENT OF THE AIR FORCE
HEADQUARTERS AIR FORCE PERSONNEL CENTER
JOINT BASE SAN ANTONIO-RANDOLPH, TEXAS**

Combat-Related Special Compensation Frequently Asked Questions

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1. What is a combat related disability?

Generally speaking, a disability must have a direct link to a specific combat-related event, which has been documented.

DD Form 2860, Appendix A, provides combat-related codes and identifies general criteria for the following:

Purple Heart
Armed Conflict
Simulating War
Hazardous Service
Instrumentality of War
Agent Orange
Radiation Exposure
Gulf War
Mustard Gas or Lewisite

Agent Orange, Radiation Exposure, Gulf War and Mustard Gas or Lewisite must be identified on their respective presumptive lists. They must also meet all other presumptive requirements such as location, operation, etc. To view the list, visit the U.S. Veterans Affairs website at www.VA.gov.

2. What happens when the Air Force Personnel Center receives a claim?

When our processing section obtains your packet they will digitize the request. Processing will then determine if each claimant meets minimum eligibility criteria. If the claimant does not meet the criteria, our office will provide a letter to the claimant.

If the claimant meets eligibility, the claim form will flow to the board for adjudication. After the board determines, approval or disapproval, the claim will flow to the branch chief.

3. What type of documentation is needed to verify my CRSC claim?

The claimant must provide a signed **DD Form 2860**, DD 214, and DD 215 and NBG 22, if applicable. Other typical official documents include, but are not limited to Veterans Affairs narrative rating decisions, service medical record, military personnel file extracts, military personnel data system printouts, prior military disability board decisions, line of duty determinations, safety mishap reports (which describe the CRSC-related event), next of kin notification, casualty reports, morning reports, duty status reports, travel vouchers, third party witness testimonials of the event causing the injury and official documents not in the military personnel record from time of incident.

Do not submit medical records that do not pertain to a combat-related disability or do not state a cause. Do not submit electronic media, EKGs, lab slips, dental records, or personal or buddy statements.

4. How long does it take to process a CRSC claim?

It typically takes an average of 30 days to process a CRSC claim. Please allow 30 days from the date of receipt of your CRSC claim to receive a written response from the program office. The response will be sent to the address indicated on the claim. If you would like to verify that the claim has been received, you may call 800-525-0102.

5. Are there any exceptions to the eligibility requirements for CRSC?

No, there are no exceptions to the eligibility requirements for CRSC. You must be in retired status, be eligible to receive military retired pay, have not waived military retirement pay in order to receive civil service retirement pay, must be rated by the VA, have a VA approved service connected disabilities, and have an active VA waiver in place with DFAS.

If you were notified by CRSC to be ineligible, you may not have signed your CRSC claim or did not supply sufficient documentation to support your claim. If this is the case then you could then become eligible if you sign your claim or send in the documentation needed to adjudicate your claim.

6. What is the difference between CRSC and Concurrent Retirement and Disability Pay (CRDP)?

CRDP covers all "service connected" disabilities. Your disability must be rated by VA at 50 percent or greater and have 20 or more years of service. Full compensation is phased in over a period of ten years and is taxed.

CRSC covers all "combat related" disabilities that have a VA rating of 10 percent or higher. Full compensation begins with the first payment and is tax free.

The Defense Finance and Accounting Service calculates the payments for both programs.

7. Can I be eligible for both CRSC and CRDP?

Possibly, but you can only receive one. If your combined service connected VA disability rating is 50 percent or greater, you were active duty, Reserve, TERA or Chapter 61 and you have 20 years of service or more and are drawing retirement pay, you will automatically receive CRDP.

If your disabilities are combat-related as determined by the CRSC program guidance, you will have the opportunity to select either CRSC or CRDP.

It is common to have a lower CRSC rating than a CRDP rating, since not all VA service connected disabilities are combat-related. Both programs restore military retirement pay which is offset when a retiree accepts compensation from the VA for a disability. If you are eligible for both CRSC and CRDP, you may only receive pay for one program at a time.

8. Is CRSC or CRDP more beneficial for me?

Some retirees could be eligible for either CRSC or CRDP. Defense Finance and Accounting Service handles all payments of both programs and looks at retirement pay, disability percentage, the offset and more before any dollar amounts are decided. Retirees should review their individual situation along with the differences between the programs to make the most educated decision based on documentation from DFAS.

9. Will I be able to choose between CRSC and CRDP?

If a retiree is awarded CRSC and also qualifies for CRDP, they will be given the choice of which compensation they would like to receive. CRDP/DFAS sends out Open Season letters near the end of December and elections are due back to DFAS by the end of January.

10. Can retired Airmen be awarded CRSC for Individual Un-employability (IU)?

Individual Un-employability is not a disability or a diagnosis. Eligibility for IU is determined by the Department of Veterans Affairs. Defense Finance and Accounting Service will include compensation for IU as they receive notification from the VA of a retired Airman meeting this status. Please note, IU is only added to a retired Airman's CRSC benefits by Defense Finance and Accounting Server when his or her CRSC total disability percentage is 60 percent or higher and previously awarded by VA.

11. Do I need to submit all medical records when I apply for CRSC?

No. Do not send us all of your medical records. You only need to submit relevant documentation that explains specifically how the injury or condition occurred within a combat-related or training-related scenario. Unnecessary documentation can impede the proper adjudication of the claim.

12. How can I identify if a disability for CRSC is presumptive for Agent Orange?

By law, only certain conditions are awarded as presumptive for Agent Orange exposure. To qualify for CRSC under an Agent Orange presumptive condition, VA documentation must specifically indicate in the narrative decision that the disability was incurred by "Agent Orange" or "Herbicide Exposure," or "Nehmer" granted. Specifically coded Agent Orange presumptive conditions may be presumed for award of CRSC if you have received a Vietnam Service Medal, Republic of Vietnam Gallantry Cross with Palm, AFEM (Vietnam) which must clearly be listed on your DD Form 214. For information on which condition qualifies for Agent Orange, please visit the [VA website](#).

13. How am I notified of the CRSC decision?

You are notified by a decision letter, which you will receive in the mail to the address provided in your claim. The letter describes the conditions, percentages, effective dates and reason why the condition was approved or disapproved. The CRSC branch will not notify you when they receive they claim.

14. Does the CRSC office have access to my military records?

No. The CRSC does not have access to any military medical or personnel records. All documentation must be submitted by the claimant.

15. What would make me ineligible for CRSC?

Reserve members who have more than 15 but less than 20 years of service and retired with physical disabilities not incurred in the line of duty under section 12731b of Title 10 USC, Total Force retirees who have waived their military retirement pay in lieu of civil service credit, service members who are not in retired status and service members not having a VA waiver who waive a portion of their retirement pay. Disability not being "service connected" by VA.

16. Who do I contact to obtain my personnel or medical records to submit with my CRSC claim?

National Personnel Records Center
1 Archives Drive
St. Louis MO 63138

Telephone: 1-866-272-6272
Fax: 314-801-9195
Email: MPR.center@nara.gov

Website: <http://www.archives.gov/veterans>

17. Are Temporary Disability Retirement List Military Service Retirees eligible for CRSC?

Yes. TDRL retirees may be eligible for CRSC compensation if their injuries or illnesses were directly caused by a combat related event or activity.

18. Why are certain documents accepted for Veterans Affairs and not allowed for CRSC?

By law, medical providers are able to accept documents that are not allowed under CRSC program guidance. Primary medical providers can be nurses, physician assistants or doctors. VA policy is in place to establish service connection for disabilities. CRSC program guidance is in place to establish a link between the VA services connected disability and a combat-related or training-related event. The documentation required by the VA and CRSC may differ. Only official military documentation, VA MTF or military medical records may be used to make CRSC determination.

19. How much money do I receive for CRSC claims?

Actual payments amounts are determined by the Defense Finance and Accounting Service and are unique for each retiree. If you have any questions regarding the amount of payment, contact DFAS at 800-321-1080.

20. How soon can I expect to receive my first payment from the Defense Finance and Accounting Service for my CRSC?

Once an approved CRSC determination has been sent to the Defense Finance and Accounting Service for processing, it can take 30-60 days to upload into DFAS's system. DFAS will contact you to inform you when the first payment will begin. If you have questions regarding the start date, you may call DFAS at 800-321-1080.

21. How can I be considered for a new disability under CRSC?

You can either write on the new VA rating decision to reopen your claim or submit a letter requesting the Air Force CRSC program office for a reconsideration request. Signature must be on all claims. Please send any new VA rating decision(s), VA rating code sheets, and pertinent medical documents which will show your newly rated service connected condition and how it is combat-related as defined by CRSC guidance.

22. Who do I contact if Defense Finance and Accounting Service have not received an approval or decision letter from the CRSC office?

You may call the Air Force Total Force Service Center to have the approval or decision letter resent to the Defense Finance and Accounting Service. The phone number is 800-525-0102.

23. What is a Department of Veterans Affairs waiver in relation to CRSC?

A VA waiver is the election of compensation in lieu of retirement pay or waiver of retirement pay to secure compensation from the VA. The VA waiver form, VA Form 21-651, is filed with the VA. The VA sends the form to the Defense Finance and Accounting Service where it is processed and made active in the retiree's pay records.

24. Why do I need a Department of Veterans Affairs waiver to apply for CRSC?

The VA waiver takes a portion or all of your retirement pay based on your VA disability percentage, and makes it a tax free VA compensation. The purpose of the waiver is to afford you a tax break on your income.

CRSC is a monthly payment that is tax free and retroactive. CRSC helps restore military retirement pay that is offset when you accept compensation from the VA for a disability or conditions that can be attributed to a combat-related event as defined by the Department of Defense program guidance. Without that compensation being waived, there is nothing for CRSC to give back.

25. How do I know if a condition is presumptive, for example Agent Orange?

By law, only certain conditions are awarded as presumptive. There For a full list of presumptive conditions visit the [VA's Benefit website](#). There must be a reference to the presumptive condition in the military retiree's VA supporting documentation.

26. Why would my disability be denied under CRSC?

The most common reason for denial of CRSC is because the documentation lacks evidence indicating how the injury occurred from a combat-related event or training- related accident. Establishing a link between the disability and the specific event or accident is the focus when it comes to awarding CRSC. For a condition to be awarded under CRSC there must be clear evidence in the supporting documentation which shows how, what, when and where your injuries occurred as related to combat or training.

There are specific criteria to what CRSC considers a training-related injury and what is not considered training, like being injured on an obstacle course during PT. CRSC does not award conditions for common injuries incurred in a combat-zone. The injury needs to be a result of direct enemy action, or as the direct result of operations against the enemy.

27. Which licensed medical professionals can give primary certifying statements for CRSC?

Licensed medical professionals who can give primary certifying statements include physicians, dentists, physician assistants, nurse practitioners, registered nurses, registered dietitians, neurologists, ophthalmologists, audiologists, speech and language pathologists, occupational and physical therapists and other licensed medical professionals within their scope of practice.

CRSC can only accept official military medical documentation or a letter from a licensed VA or military treatment facility on their respective letterhead. The letter needs to state how the injury occurred and how it is linked to a combat-related event. The examiner or doctor needs to indicate in the letter that they have reviewed the retiree's military service treatment records.

28. How do I correct/change/update personal information in the CRSC database?

You may call the Air Force Total Force Service Center at 800-525-0102.

29. What would cause my CRSC payments to increase?

CRSC payments may increase if your service connected VA rated disabilities, which are also combat-related increase in percentage or your effective date is retroactively awarded at an earlier effective date by the VA.

The Defense Finance and Accounting Service may automatically begin to pay out the increased percentage or effective date, however CRSC program office needs to be informed of these increases in percentages or effective dates for your combat-related disabilities so they can update your CRSC claim and provide DFAS with an updated decision letter.

30. Are there any agencies that can help me with my CRSC claim?

There are many agencies that can help you prepare a claim for CRSC. You should check your local phonebook for local listings. Veteran agencies the CRSC Program Office deals with on a regular basis include:

State VA Offices

The American Legion

The Veteran of Foreign War Organization

The Disabled American Veterans

The Military Order of the Purple Heart

31. Where can I obtain a Veterans Administration waiver, in relation to CRSC?

The VA waiver should have been distributed with your VA packet. However, if you did not receive the VA waiver, you can request one through the VA by calling 800-827-1000 or visit the [VA website](#).

32. Can CRSC be garnished?

To find out more information we suggest visiting the [Defense Finance and Accounting Service's website](#) or giving them a call at 800-321-1080. Customer service representatives are available Monday through Friday from 7 a.m. to 7:30 p.m. Eastern.

33. Who should I contact if there is an unexplained change in the amount of my monthly CRSC?

If the VA recently made a change to your service connected disabilities, notify the Air Force Total Force Service Center at 800-525-0102. Otherwise, you should contact the Defense Finance and Accounting Service at 800-321-1080.

34. Can retirees who have combined their military service time with civil service time and have since retired from civil service apply for CRSC?

No, you are not eligible for CRSC if you have chosen civil service retirement pay over military retirement pay.

35. Will I have to make an election to either receive military retirement pay or CRSC pay?

Yes, CRSC is compensation for military retirement pay that is offset due to receiving VA disability pay, your CRSC payment will arrive as CRSC, not as military retired pay.

36. Does CRSC have death benefits for spouses of deceased veterans?

No, CRSC does not have death benefits for spouses. The CRSC benefit ends when the retiree is deceased. CRSC is for military retirees only, so widows, widowers and other family members are not eligible to receive this compensation. Any retroactive payments still due at death will be paid to the retirees estate.

VISIT OUR OFFICIAL WEBSITE: <http://www.afpc.af.mil>

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37. Are CRSC payments protected from inclusion in bankruptcy cases?

Yes, CRSC pay is not affected by bankruptcy cases.

38. How can I update my CRSC account to show a different direct deposit for payments?

You should contact the Defense Finance and Accounting Service Pay Center at 800-321-1080.

39. Are CRSC payments taxable?

No. CRSC is not taxable.

40. How much money do I receive for CRSC claims?

Since CRSC is compensation for military retirement pay that is offset due to receiving VA disability pay, your CRSC can never exceed your total military retirement pay. Actual payment amounts are determined by Defense Finance and Accounting Service and are unique for each retiree based on years of service, retirement pay and more. If you have any questions regarding the amount of pay, you should contact DFAS at 800-321-1080.

41. I am now receiving Individual Un-employability (IU) from the VA, do I need to submit a reconsideration request to update my previous CRSC claim?

No, if you are rated at 60 percent or more for CRSC, we do not need to notify the Defense Finance and Accounting Service that your CRSC should be paid up to the 100 percent rate because of IU. DFAS will automatically calculate your CRSC award of 60 percent or more and your IU. Please note that if you are receiving IU and the VA increases your individual disabilities up to a 100 percent combined, the VA will remove your IU which could affect your overall CRSC entitlement if it's less than the VA's 100 percent rating.

42. I need to contact DFAS about my CRSC, do you have a contact number?

You can contact the Defense Finance and Accounting Service at 800-321-1080.

43. How are effective dates determined?

The effective dates that CRSC determines are based upon retirement date, program eligibility date, VA disability effective date and Statute of Limitation (if applicable), whichever is later.